

Personal memo from
JOSHUA LEDERBERG

Dr Arnold Ludwig ✓
2/8/94

• Sources of superego.

Dear Arnold -

I really will have to get on the case, to get close to some of your questions. My specific recollections are too overlain with ~~later day~~ ^{later day} surmise and theory to be reliable on the face.

• Certainly I had great reinforcement from parents and teachers. • It is a very Jewish phenomenon. • There was some expiation or internalization for violating some traditional rituals (like writing or secular study on the Sabbath). I am surprised that you deny "obligation" but that is part of the Diaspora ^{surviving} the right to be accepted as an American citizen when others less fortunate were being persecuted. (And that was reinforced ^{later} by my being sheltered by the Navy V-12 program from the hazards of front-line combat during World War II. And no coincidence that I continue to work for the CNO and the SecDef today! - the latter, by the way, a close friend.)

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(X) .. X. >>

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Re somatic dis-ease.

(nudees)
No, no more than frustration at
other "Zeigarniks" or failures of
consummation.

Well, as I find bits of time away
from lab or Washington I do write
bits and pieces of auto bio. memoir.

You're right - the Gulf War was
not a controlled clinical trial,
and it is quite murky what time
causes can we can reach!

Keep prodding; that I came up with
credit answers. It's helpful to me.

Joshua

b. 1903 emigrated from Palestine 1924. Brief study in US, 1924.

How place my father? Though "orthodox" in liturgy, he did strive for modernity: witness the fact of his schooling in the U.S. and his later emigration. He regarded himself as an intellectual. He had a reputation (among other rabbis) of being a brilliant scholar. He gave many of his sermons in English; probably some in Yiddish; They always had some allusion to contemporary events: we subscribed to the N. Y. Times, and were both avid readers. He had studied English in N.Y. in 1922; and of course had the experience of British governance in Palestine from the time he was 14 years of age. So he surely had a far more cosmopolitan background than the typical immigrant of the 1900s. And the Jewish community in New York of the 1930s had advanced enormously towards integration into American life.

or he
couldn't
have
gotten
a v.

They settled momentarily in Montclair, N.J., teaching Hebrew at the Congregation Shomrei Emunah. I presume some connections of family or friendship had enabled him to find that position. Their home (a boarding house?), at 202 Glenridge Avenue, has been razed and is located in the slum area near the erstwhile train station (also razed). Having revisited Montclair only very recently, I had been puzzled at a Montclair address - one generally associated with an upperclass New York suburb - but this proves to be one too close to the railroad tracks. I was delivered at Mountainside Hospital on May 23, 1925, uneventfully except for a recorded birthweight of 11.5 pounds. That cannot have been too uneventful for my mother; but she had a reasonably robust frame. In later years, she did have increasing problems with diabetes, known to be associated with high birthweights of offspring. ??Congenital obesity.

had episodic performances like Richard Dix, ... if not for a nickel then no more than a dime. Before TV and the barrage of visual imagery that saturates our current environment. Radio Days.... Lone Ranger; Buck Rogers; Green Hornet; Arch Oboler plays; Orson Welles -- Mercury Theater; Ellery Queen; The Shadow

Now still waiting for a Cable-TV replay of some old Dix movies on the Transatlantic Tunnel; and space travel to Andromeda.

Library at 160' St. on St. Nicholas Ave.

When I was a few months old, my family moved to Washington Heights, a district north of Harlem in Manhattan; Zwi became rabbi at the orthodox Congregation Ahavath Israel, at W. 157 Street between Amsterdam Avenue and Broadway, and would remain there for 15 years. My earliest (screen?) memory is of the ticker tape parade for Charles Lindbergh (dated June 14 1927) returning from his solo flight to Paris. I was perched on my father's shoulders, peering at the first of a group of culture heroes shared between my father's and my own psyche. My brother Seymour arrived on October 30, 1928. My first distinct recollection of him is as accompaniment on a trip with my mother to visit her relatives in Palestine in 1933. I have vivid recollections of the ship voyages, of an overnight train ride, second class, from Brindisi to Naples, of a two weeks stay in Naples and the street life there, of the stop in Athens (Acropolis, Theseum), and of the reasonably harmonious mix of Jewish and Arab life in Palestine. The riots were to follow later. Aboard the ships (Italian Liners August and

Rex), we boys would try to sneak past the stewards into first class. I had some near-serious accidents in the swimming pool -- traumatic infections of my shins, with purulence that took months to heal, and (paradox) nearly drowning in the pool aboard ship when a wave swept me off the ladder.

I also recall seeing the Blue Eagle posters of the NRA on the New York streets after debarking from the ship on return, and asking whether fascism had come to the U.S. as it had to Italy. From about that time, I had been reading the New York Times daily, and indeed would save huge piles of them, reluctant to lose that captured bit of history. Headlines like those of the Lindbergh baby's kidnapping (1932) and the Reichstag fire (1933) still leave clear images.

At age 5, I was enrolled in kindergarten at P.S. 46, located at W. 156 Street and St. Nicholas Ave. The location of the school, just at the edge of Harlem, gave no problems during school hours. It taught a wide range of students, black and white, Jewish, Irish, Italian, dull and bright in every ethnic category. The street gangs, especially the Irish and the negro boys were another matter, and woe befall any youngster who strayed from the certified safe-passaged routes from home to school. Years later, the street gang problems were to be a special target of conciliation among Christian and Jewish leadership groups. It should still be said that the level of violence was constrained far below mortal; switch blade knives, guns, and hard dope were not yet part of the commerce of the public schools, even in difficult marginal neighborhoods. Harlem had begun to deteriorate, but still had strong middle-class representation. The further overcrowding of Harlem with migrants from the rural South and from Puerto Rico was not to peak until after the war.

As rabbi and teacher, my father had a certain social status in the local Jewish community, uncorrelated with his income. At a time of depression, we had a steady if impecunious financial security supported by the lower middle-class merchants of the congregation. I do not believe we were ever hungry; but my mother would work part time as a caterer, i.e. cook, or in teaching Hebrew when she could. My father began a life of chronic illness, however, in the mid-1930's particularly with episodes of ulcerative colitis, which began to impair his energy and his ability to work. This shifted more and more responsibility to my mother, and she took an ever more dominant role in managing the family's affairs. My father retreated to his own liturgical studies more and more, but would respond to my own occasional inquiries about current events or Biblical interpretation, or whatever else I could engage him with. But I did not know enough to question him closely about his own youth, intellectual development, explicit philosophical or religious position. I was too busy differentiating my own. And I have to remind myself how young he was (b. 1903), and it is only in retrospect that I can fantasize what impact our dialectic may have made on his own thinking. My compromise was close to those of the Ethical Culture movement: the Jewish people had indeed been "chosen", to suffer, to be dispersed, and to carry the mission of a universalist, ethical monotheism. As I've grown older, the historic meaning of Judaism has impressed me evermore; but the Diaspora should then transcend a national state. America comes even closer to that ideal than Israel; and Israel is ever forced, in its very struggle for existence, in its reaction to the Holocaust, to adopting contemporary expedients short of that ideal. It takes a country of the power of America to take the next steps (and such power can make even more consequential mistakes.)

*what I try to help forward in
working for D.O.O!*

Here's a fragment

I sometimes attribute my creativity to the child still within me, that source of fantasy I can still couple with relentless criticism. Having never fully "grown up", I must also reflect, "was I ever an authentic child?" How reasonable is it to have crystallized one's life-course before an age of consent? {My mother saved a composition from school, 2d grade, 1932: "When I Grow Up: I want to be a scientist (sic) like Einstein". The sic foretells my present career as scientist-ist. However, I never became a scientist quite like Einstein!}

{?Pre-school precocity? I recall my mother saying that I was a bit slow learning to speak. I must have been reading in kindergarden however, and took off rapidly after that. Can't compare JS Mill without bringing in Mill Sr.}

That child was precocious -- no J. S. Mill -- enough to attract positive and reinforcing attention, and to generate some problems in the management of my education in the N. Y. City Public Schools. Happily, some extraordinarily sympathetic teachers honored the limitations of the formal curriculum and offered kindly guidance to my own reading as an alternative to boring classroom reviews. My part of the contract was to not disrupt them. That precocity also shaped an intellectual and emotional isolation, especially from my age-peers, that only began to be dissipated at a life stage when age no longer mattered. How I would have ached for a mentor then, for a chance to meet a Member of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research! At age 11 I was teaching myself calculus and organic chemistry, at 12-13 Bodansky's Introduction to Physiological Chemistry, and history and philosophy as well, mostly through the local NY Public Library and the stack privileges generously granted me at Cooper Union.

{Recall reading calculus on Edgecombe Ave (#555); Bodansky at Coney Island, summer holiday. Debby Goodman (Marjorie Guthrie relative.) My grades at Stuyvesant High School were as good as a slothful effort in class would earn: I was too busy at my self-education.

{Recheck that. 3d in Regents Scholarship List} The grades sufficed to earn a scholarship to Columbia College; but they would not admit me until after my 16th birthday. Fortunately, as the next chapter will tell in more detail, I had access to the American Institute Science Laboratory, and I spent the months after graduating from HS in my first serious laboratory experiments, cytochemical studies on the nucleoli of plant cells. The methods at my disposal were too crude to have a useful (publishable) result; but histochemistry was great fun, and the experience did foretell a durable commitment to the application of chemistry to the understanding of biological structure. Chemistry of Fixation. See reports at SHS, AISL

Cf file: update Relate to accounts of "chromatin" in Wilson; Sharp Microtome Vademecum ... Bot Gardens Library Zirkle references; history of staining